

MAUDE ADAMS

- i **1872 -1953**
- i **Actress**
- i **Inventor, Educator**



Maude Adams was best known for her role as Pan in “Peter Pan” first performed in 1906. The play was written for Maude by James Barrie, her close friend. She played the role 223 times in her career. Most of her fans did not know that she was a woman portraying Pan.

Maude was a wonderful actress and caring person. Sometimes she raised the pay of fellow actors out of her own pocket and gave gifts to stage hands. One experience tells of a theater owner who doubled the price of tickets to one of Maude’s shows because her name brought a sold-out house. Before Maude would perform she made him give refunds to the overcharged attendees. Maude usually shunned the limelight of show business and was known for her generosity.

Maude was born in Salt Lake City and made her first theatrical appearance at the age of nine months. Her mother was an actress and they often acted together. Maude debuted at the age of ten in a production entitled “Esmeralda.” Beginning at sixteen she joined many theater companies. She played the role of Lady Babbie 300 times in New York and 65 times in Boston. She was in many other productions.

Maude worked at General Electric Laboratories experimenting with color lamps for movies. She invented a high-powered incandescent lamp that made colored movies possible. She was given no credit for her contribution. She was advised to sue but refused and later noted in her diary that she thought herself “an idiot” for her decision.

Maude was forced to deal with tragedies during 1915-1916. In that short time she lost her grandmother, her manager Charles Fohrman, and her mother. These events temporarily put a damper on her career.

From 1937-1943 Maude headed the drama department of Stephens College in Missouri.

Maude became a world traveler. She once said of the Swiss Alps, “They are inspiring but not friendly like the mountains that protect the lovely Valley of Salt Lake. My childhood had been guarded by the kindly Wasatch Range, and the Rockies were friends from my beginning.” Maude returned to Utah as often as her career permitted. She loved coming home and once stated, “At Grandmother’s house there were vastly entertaining things: cows and sheep and horses and dogs. And trees to climb with cherries at the top. And, oh, the sweet-smelling hay in the barn and the swing tied to one of the rafters. There were fields to roam, whole fields of wild-flowers-freedom.”